

REMARKS

This Amendment responds to the Office Action mailed January 2, 2004 (“the Office Action”). In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 2 as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,720,749 to Rupp (“Rupp”). Claims 3-11 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if re-written in independent form. In response, claim 3 has been amended, claims 1-2 and 12-14 have been canceled without prejudice, and new claims 15-25 have been added. The above amendments do not represent acquiescence in the Examiner’s rejections, but, rather, have been made to expedite prosecution of the present application. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original claims in, for example, one or more continuation applications. Claims 3-11 and 15-25 will be pending upon entry of this Amendment. Reconsideration of this application and allowance are respectfully requested in view of the amendments above and the remarks below.

Election/Restriction

Applicants note that claims 12-14 have been withdrawn from further consideration and that the restriction requirement mailed September 23, 2003 has been made final. In response, applicants have canceled claims 12-14 without prejudice. The cancellation of these claims does not represent acquiescence in the Examiner’s restriction requirement. Applicants reserve the right to pursue these claims in one or more divisional or continuation applications.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as obvious over Rupp in view of the level of skill in the art. More specifically, the Office Action states that it “it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the device of Rupp with the tubular shank being the male connector with resilient arms and the distal end of the drive shaft being the female connector for receiving the male connector, since it has been held that a mere reversal of the essential working parts of a device involves only routine skill in the art.” (Office Action at 3.) Claims 1 and 2 have been cancelled without prejudice.

Allowable Subject Matter/Claim Objections

Claims 3-11 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. (Office Action at 4.) Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of this allowable subject matter, and have amended claim 3 to incorporate the limitations of claims 1 and 2. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the objection to claims 3-11 be withdrawn, and that amended claim 3, and its dependent claims 4-11, be allowed.

New Claims

New claims 15-25 have been added to further define the present invention. Each of new claims 15-25 is fully supported by the specification of the present application. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully submit that new claims 15-25 define features that are not disclosed by the prior art of record, and accordingly, request allowance of same.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant s respectfully request that the Examiner consider claims 3-11 and 15-25, with a view towards allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney, if a telephone call could help resolve any remaining items.

A separate fee transmittal sheet is attached for the presentation of additional claims. Should any additional fees be required, please charge such fees to Jones Day deposit account no. 50-3013.

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Respectfully submitted,
THOMAS P. SULLY REG. NO. 45,086
FOR BRIAN M. ROTHERY 35,340

Brian M. Rothery (Reg. No.)
JONES DAY
222 East 41st Street
New York, New York 10017
(212) 326-3939